

THE REMONSTRANCE.

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The Remonstrance is published quarterly by the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women. It expresses the views of women in Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, New York, Illinois, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and other states.

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MASSACHUSETTS SUFFRAGISTS AGAIN DEFEATED.

THE Massachusetts legislative Committee on Constitutional Amendments granted a hearing, on the evening of February 23rd, on a petition asking for an amendment to the Constitution striking the word "male" from the qualifications for voters. The cause of the petitioners was presented by Mrs. Theresa Crowley, who called upon the leaders of small groups of women, supposed to represent "Mothers," "Working-women," "Teachers," "Leisure Women," "Socialists," etc. who marched in procession into the room, carrying explanatory banners.

Robert Luce, Esq., of Somerville, counsel for the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, conducted the case for the remonstrants. The first speaker whom he introduced was

Mrs. A. J. George of Brookline who said in substance:

The ballot is a responsibility. Women are not idle, nor selfish, nor unmindful of their social duties, when they say "we protest against this responsibility until you show us that by having it we can better meet the responsibilities we already have."

We live under a majority rule. One would think to hear some of the arguments that casting the ballot was to obtain for each woman the one thing she held dear. Within a year, leading suffragist speakers have argued that if woman could vote, she would settle the divorce problem, she would drive out tuberculosis, she would abolish the white slave traffic, she would destroy the trusts, and close the prisons. Within the last month a former president of the National Suffrage Association has said that if women could vote in New York the taxes would be reduced one-half in that city.

As to the possible effect of the suffrage on wages, I will submit to the

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committee an extract from Miss Sumner's work on "Equal Suffrage." Miss Sumner is an ardent suffragist but she says: "The difference in the salaries of men and women teachers in Colorado, instead of being unusually small, is unusually large."

Until we have some promise that woman's political sense is safer, saner and steadier than man's, it certainly is neither expedient, nor just, nor patriotic to ask for the extension of suffrage to women. The granting of the franchise would double the number of voters to be informed and educated and trained and the results would not compensate for the economic or social outlay.

There is a grave possibility of a great social disturbance involved in this question. Tonight you have seen women arrayed against women. That is bad. You might see women arrayed against men. That is deadly.

Mr. Frank Foxcroft of Cambridge

opposed the pending proposition on three grounds: First, that the great majority of women do not want the ballot; Second, that the average woman is already carrying her full share of the burdens of life; Third, that there is nothing, either in the condition of society or the condition of women to justify putting upon women responsibilities for which they have not been trained and which they could not meet without taking time and strength needed for other activities. He pointed to the vehement opposition by New York suffragists to the proposal to allow the women of the state a chance to express their wishes regarding the suffrage as proof that the suffragists know that the great majority of women are not with them; and he cited as further proof the vote in Massachusetts fifteen years ago, when less than 4 per cent of the women of voting age expressed themselves in favor of municipal suffrage and there were 47 towns in which not a single woman voted in favor, and 138 other towns in no one of which did more than 15 women vote Yes. He declared that the average woman, the wife, the mother, the woman of the home has no time nor strength for the responsibilities of the ballot, and that society has no excuse for imposing them upon her. As to the purification of politics by women, he quoted Miss Helen Sumner as admitting that in a single Colorado county there were 1,772 women

fraudulently registered. Finally, he remarked upon the fact that, while Kansas had given municipal suffrage to women more than twenty years ago, all attempts to extend the voting privileges of women in that state had failed. In 1894, the voters rejected a suffrage amendment by a majority of more than 35,000; and ever since legislature after legislature had rejected every form of suffrage proposal. If municipal woman suffrage had worked well, how could this attitude of Kansas voters and legislatures be explained?

The next speaker was

Mrs. Frederick T. Lord of Boston

who said:

It is because I am what is called a progressive woman that I am here to speak against the pending proposition. I believe in the equality of men and women. By that I mean that men and women are equal factors in social progress. Not that we are identical, for surely each sex excels the other in many of its fields of activity.

I believe that there is nothing progressive in creating the burden of a new obligation for women when the result will be no gain and might be a detriment, for it seems to me,—even after attending many suffrage meetings,—that from habits of life and temperamental organization the majority of men will conduct the Government of this country better than it would be conducted by the majority of women.

I believe, also, that the entrance of women into political life would be a loss to the progress of the nation, because the excitement of political life would absorb our energy from the channels of service in which women are more valuable than men. I mean the training of the next generation of citizens in our homes and schools and also the care of the deficient, both moral and physical. We are also only just realizing that as the great body of consumers we are the ones to stand with the working women and obtain for them fair wages by refusing to purchase goods made under an unfair wage.

We women have the power to help the working women to better living through non-political organization than could ever be obtained by the ballot. Why should the working woman be deluded into thinking that dropping a ballot into a box will re-

construct her economic standing?

And now I want to speak of what I believe is the peculiar value of women in public service as commissioners and trustees. We not only bring our woman's point of view into the realms of public life for which we are fitted, but we serve our country, our state or our city as non-political agents.

I believe that this service is of such value that we women can ask you men to guarantee it to us as a woman's right.

We therefore do ask you to perpetuate a division of duties that has given to women in America a power such as no other women in the world have developed, for we women are only just learning to apply this power of specialized efficiency through non-political organization, to the social progress of the Twentieth Century.

When the work which is peculiarly our own is done as well as it should be done, then gentlemen, it will be time enough to decide whether women are needed in political life.

Miss Frances J. Dyer of Boston

who was next introduced, emphasized the fact that the great majority of women do not desire the ballot, and asked that due consideration be given to the wishes of this large, though silent, constituency who are already doing so much for human betterment. She called attention to the excellent work which the remonstrants are engaged in as officers and directors in hundreds of organizations which represent forward movements in education and philanthropy, while distinctively religious work is almost wholly in their hands. Suffragists are conspicuous by their absence in the ranks of Sunday school teachers, church visitors and leaders in city, home and foreign missions.

Robert Luce, Esq.

counsel of the Association, opened his remarks by calling attention to the proof given by the petitioners of their incapacity for the ballot, by their unfair treatment of witnesses opposed to them, and by the display of their emotions by hissing and other marks of disapproval. At every hearing on the subject, he said, they demonstrate their lack of judicial capacity, of self-control, of the power to approach serious problems without passion or prejudice. Mr. Luce went on to argue that if the